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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

EDMOND NEAL,

Plaintiff,

vs.

THE COPPER ROOM LLC D/B/A  
COUCOU; ABDESSELAM B.  
WHITTEN, AS TRUSTEE OF THE  
RANDLET GUY WHITTEN  
REVOCABLE 1986 TRUST; and DOES 1  
to 10,

Defendants.

**Case No.:**

COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE  
RELIEF AND DAMAGES FOR DENIAL  
OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF A DISABLED  
PERSON IN VIOLATIONS OF

1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES  
ACT, 42 U.S.C. §12131 et seq.;

2. CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH CIVIL  
RIGHTS ACT;

3. CALIFORNIA'S DISABLED  
PERSONS ACT;

4. CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY  
CODE;

5. NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiff EDMOND NEAL ("Plaintiff") complains of Defendants THE COPPER ROOM LLC D/B/A COUCOU; ABDESSELAM B. WHITTEN, AS TRUSTEE OF THE RANDLET GUY WHITTEN REVOCABLE 1986 TRUST; and DOES 1 to 10 ("Defendants") and alleges as follows:

**PARTIES**

1  
2 1. Plaintiff is a California resident with a physical disability. Plaintiff is an  
3 amputee below his right knee and is substantially limited in his ability to walk. Plaintiff  
4 requires the use of a wheelchair at all times when traveling in public.

5 2. Defendants are, or were at the time of the incident, the real property owners,  
6 business operators, lessors and/or lessees of the real property for a restaurant  
7 (“Business”) located at or about 9045 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, California.

8 3. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or  
9 otherwise of Defendant DOES 1 through 10, and each of them, are unknown to Plaintiff,  
10 who therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will ask leave of  
11 Court to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities have been  
12 ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and, based thereon, alleges that each such  
13 fictitiously named Defendants are responsible in some manner, and therefore, liable to  
14 Plaintiff for the acts herein alleged.

15 4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that, at all relevant  
16 times, each of the Defendants was the agent, employee, or alter-ego of each of the other  
17 Defendants, and/or was acting in concert with each of the other Defendants, and in doing  
18 the things alleged herein was acting with the knowledge and consent of the other  
19 Defendants and within the course and scope of such agency or employment relationship.

20 5. Whenever and wherever reference is made in this Complaint to any act or  
21 failure to act by a defendant or Defendants, such allegations and references shall also be  
22 deemed to mean the acts and failures to act of each Defendant acting individually, jointly  
23 and severally.

24 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

25 6. The Court has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 USC §§ 1331 and  
26 1343 for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 USC §12101, *et*  
27 *seq.*).  
28



14. These barriers and conditions denied Plaintiff full and equal access to the Business and caused Plaintiff difficulty and frustration. Plaintiff wishes to return and patronize the Business; however, Plaintiff is deterred from visiting the Business because his knowledge of these violations prevents him from returning until the barriers are removed.

15. Based on the violations, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that there are additional barriers to accessibility at the Business after further site inspection. Plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. *See Doran v. 7-Eleven, Inc.* 524 F.3d 1034 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2008).

16. In addition, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that Defendants knew that particular barriers render the Business inaccessible, violate state and federal law, and interfere with access for the physically disabled.

17. At all relevant times, Defendants had and still have control and dominion over the conditions at this location and had and still have the financial resources to remove these barriers without much difficulty or expenses to make the Business accessible to the physically disabled in compliance with ADDAG and Title 24 regulations. Defendants have not removed such barriers and have not modified the Business to conform to accessibility regulations.

## FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

## **VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990**

18. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

19. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or leases to, or operates a place of public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

20. Discrimination, *inter alia*, includes:

- 1 a. A failure to make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or  
2 procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such  
3 goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations  
4 to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that  
5 making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of  
6 such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or  
7 accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).
- 8 b. A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no  
9 individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or  
10 otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the  
11 absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can  
12 demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the  
13 nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or  
14 accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden. 42  
15 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iii).
- 16 c. A failure to remove architectural barriers, and communication barriers  
17 that are structural in nature, in existing facilities, and transportation  
18 barriers in existing vehicles and rail passenger cars used by an  
19 establishment for transporting individuals (not including barriers that  
20 can only be removed through the retrofitting of vehicles or rail  
21 passenger cars by the installation of a hydraulic or other lift), where  
22 such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).
- 23 d. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum  
24 extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily  
25 accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including  
26 individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum  
27 extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the  
28 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered

1 area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with  
2 disabilities where such alterations to the path or travel or the  
3 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered area  
4 are not disproportionate to the overall alterations in terms of cost and  
5 scope. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

6 21. Where parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces shall be  
7 provided. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5); 2010 ADA Standards § 208. One in every  
8 eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in  
9 (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated “van accessible.” 1991 ADA  
10 Standards § 4.1.2(5)(b). For every six or fraction of six parking spaces, at least one shall  
11 be a van accessible parking space. 2010 ADA Standards § 208.2.4.

12 22. Parking facilities that provide valet parking services shall provide at least  
13 one passenger loading zone complying with 503. 2010 ADA Standards § 209.4.  
14 Passenger loading zones shall provide a vehicular pull-up space 96 inches (2440 mm)  
15 wide minimum and 20 feet (6100 mm) long minimum. 2010 ADA Standards § 503.2.  
16 Passenger loading zones shall provide access aisles complying with 503 adjacent to the  
17 vehicle pull-up space. Access aisles shall adjoin an accessible route and shall not overlap  
18 the vehicular way. 2010 ADA Standards § 503.3.

19 23. Here, Defendants failed to provide a passenger loading zone for the parking  
20 facility that provide valet parking services.

21 24. A public accommodation shall maintain in operable working condition those  
22 features of facilities and equipment that are required to be readily accessible to and usable  
23 by persons with disabilities by the Act or this part. 28 C.F.R. 35.211(a).

24 25. By failing to maintain the facility to be readily accessible and usable by  
25 Plaintiff, Defendants are in violation of Plaintiff’s rights under the ADA and its related  
26 regulations.

27 26. The Business has denied and continues to deny full and equal access to  
28 Plaintiff and to other people with disabilities. Plaintiff has been and will continue to be

1 discriminated against due to the lack of accessible facilities, and therefore, seeks  
2 injunctive relief to alter facilities to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable  
3 by individuals with disabilities.

## 4 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

### 5 **VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

6 27. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
7 paragraphs in this complaint.

8 28. California Civil Code § 51 states, “All persons within the jurisdiction of this  
9 state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry,  
10 national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual  
11 orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full  
12 and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business  
13 establishments of every kind whatsoever.”

14 29. California Civil Code § 52 states, “Whoever denies, aids or incites a denial,  
15 or make any discrimination or distinction contrary to Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6, is liable  
16 for each and every offense for the actual damages, and any amount that may be  
17 determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the  
18 amount of actual damage but in no case less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and any  
19 attorney’s fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any  
20 person denied the rights provided in Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6.

21 30. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifies, “a violation of the right of any  
22 individual under federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336)  
23 shall also constitute a violation of this section.”

24 31. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial  
25 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services by  
26 physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52.  
27 Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code §§  
28 51 and 52.



1           32. The violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act caused Plaintiff to experience  
2 difficulty, discomfort, or embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory  
3 damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

4                                   **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

5                                   **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT**

6           33. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
7 paragraphs in this complaint.

8           34. California Civil Code § 54.1(a) states, “Individuals with disabilities shall be  
9 entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to  
10 accommodations, advantages, facilities, medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics,  
11 and physicians’ offices, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles,  
12 railroad trains, motorbuses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes  
13 of transportation (whether private, public, franchised, licensed, contracted, or otherwise  
14 provided), telephone facilities, adoption agencies, private schools, hotels, loading places,  
15 places of public accommodations, amusement, or resort, and other places in which the  
16 general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by  
17 law, or state or federal regulation, and applicable alike to all persons.

18           35. California Civil Code § 54.3(a) states, “Any person or persons, firm or  
19 corporation who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of public facilities  
20 as specified in Sections 54 and 54.1 or otherwise interferes with the rights of an  
21 individual with a disability under Sections 54, 54.1 and 54.2 is liable for each offense for  
22 the actual damages, and any amount as may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting  
23 without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages but in no  
24 case less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be  
25 determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights  
26 provided in Section 54, 54.1, and 54.2.

27           36. California Civil Code § 54(d) specifies, “a violation of the right of an  
28 individual under Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) also



1 constitute a violation of this section, and nothing in this section shall be construed to limit  
2 the access of any person in violation of that act.

3 37. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial  
4 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, and facilities by physically disabled  
5 persons within the meaning of California Civil Code § 54. Defendants have  
6 discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code § 54.

7 38. The violations of the California Disabled Persons Act caused Plaintiff to  
8 experience difficulty, discomfort, and embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for  
9 statutory damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

10 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

11 **CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 19955, et seq.**

12 39. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
13 paragraphs in this complaint.

14 40. Plaintiff and other similar physically disabled persons who require the use of  
15 a wheelchair are unable to use public facilities on a “full and equal” basis unless each  
16 such facility is in compliance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code §  
17 19955 et seq. Plaintiff is a member of the public whose rights are protected by the  
18 provisions of California Health & Safety Code § 19955 et seq.

19 41. The purpose of California Health & Safety Code § 1995 et seq. is to ensure  
20 that public accommodations or facilities constructed in this state with private funds  
21 adhere to the provisions of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 4450) of Division 5 of  
22 Title 1 of the Government Code. The code relating to such public accommodations also  
23 requires that “when sanitary facilities are made available for the public, clients, or  
24 employees in these stations, centers, or buildings, they shall be made available for  
25 persons with disabilities.

26 42. Title II of the ADA holds as a “general rule” that no individual shall be  
27 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of goods  
28 (or use), services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who

owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a). Further, each and every violation of the ADA also constitutes a separate and distinct violation of California Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d), thus independently justifying an award of damages and injunctive relief pursuant to California law, including but not limited to Civil Code § 54.3 and Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq.

## **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

### **NEGLIGENCE**

43. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

44. Defendants have a general duty and a duty under the ADA, Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act to provide safe and accessible facilities to the Plaintiff.

45. Defendants breached their duty of care by violating the provisions of ADA, Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act.

46. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligent conduct, Plaintiff has suffered damages.

### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully prays for relief and judgment against Defendants as follows:

1. For preliminary and permanent injunction directing Defendants to comply with the Americans with Disability Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act;

2. Award of all appropriate damages, including but not limited to statutory damages, general damages and treble damages in amounts, according to proof;

3. Award of all reasonable restitution for Defendants' unfair competition practices;

4. Reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit in this action;

5. Prejudgment interest pursuant to California Civil Code § 3291; and

1           6.       Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

2                               **DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY**

3           Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby  
4 demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

5  
6 Dated: December 9, 2024

SO. CAL. EQUAL ACCESS GROUP

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9                               By:      /s/ Jason J. Kim       
10                               Jason J. Kim, Esq.  
11                               Attorneys for Plaintiff  
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